AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Previously Presented) A video game device for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said mark being progressively increased in correspondence with a greater the degree of difficulty of the technique;

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with said set degree of difficulty, said series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set,

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a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive command inputs for causing the play character to perform said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the successive command inputs in accordance with the said series of commands displayed by the command guiding unit, and

a second operable member, operated by the game player, for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in response to operations of said second operable member performed by the game player within a predetermined time period;

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play character in accordance with the successive command inputs given by the first operable member.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein the mark changing unit is further responsive to a third operable member provided in the operation unit.

4. (Original) A video game device according to claim 1, further comprising a landing setting unit for causing the play character to land.

5. (Previously Presented) A video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty of the technique;

a command guiding unit for providing a command input guide guiding the game player in command input for causing the play character to perform the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty based on the command input executed by the game player, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting

the command in accordance with the command input guide given by the

command guiding unit, and

a second operable member, operated by the game player, for

causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark larger in

response to a greater number of operations of said second operable member

performed by the game player within a predetermined time period;

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed in accordance

with the command given by the first operable member based on correspondence

with said command input guide; and

a landing setting unit for causing the play character to land, the landing

setting unit setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play

character in a partial area of the game screen image, setting a landing success zone

in the landing setting display area, displaying a landing mark which is movable,

and enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth operable

member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located within the

landing success zone.

6. (Original) A video game device according to claim 5, wherein the landing success zone is set narrower as the degree of difficulty is set higher.

7. (Previously Presented) A video game device according to claim 5, wherein a command input area is set in a partial area of the game screen image, and the command input guide is displayed in the input area in the form of icons.

8. (Previously Presented) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein a higher evaluation is given as a shorter time is required by the game player to input the successive command inputs.

9. (Previously Presented) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein when the input of the successive command inputs is not completed within a predetermined time, the play character is caused to perform an action different from one performed when said successive command inputs are completed within the predetermined time.

10. (Original) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein the play character is caused to perform a complicated technique when the set degree of difficulty is high.

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11. (Currently Amended)A technique setting method for setting a technique in a video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the method comprising the steps of:

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a degree of difficulty of [[the]] a technique in response to a game player input;

setting the degree of difficulty of the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with a size of the mark;

guiding [[an]] inputting operation succesive operations of a first operable member in accordance with a command for causing the play character to perform a technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

controlling the play character to perform the technique based on the successive operations of the first operable member wherein the play character performs throughout execution of the technique in accordance with the successive operations;

evaluating the technique performed by the game player by inputting the operations on the first operable member in accordance with the guiding based on the command in accordance with the guide through operation of a first operable member; and

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wherein <u>the step of</u> progressively increasing the size of the mark includes

<u>the game player input being a number of operations of a second operable member</u>

<u>by the game player and</u> setting the size of said mark larger <u>is</u> in response to a

~~greater~~ <u>the</u> number of operations of [[a]] <u>the</u> second operable member by the game

player within a predetermined time period to indicate the degree of difficulty is

greater <u>wherein the size of the mark is increased with increase in a total number</u>

<u>of the number of operations</u>.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A technique setting method according to claim

11, further comprising the step of changing said mark corresponding to the degree

of difficulty through operation of a third operable member in conjunction with said

second operational member.

14. (Original) A technique setting method according to claim 11, further

comprising the step of causing the play character to land.

15. (Currently Amended) A technique setting method for setting a technique

in a video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed

on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the method comprising the steps of:

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character;

setting the degree of difficulty of technique to be performed by the play character to correspond to the size of the mark;

guiding an inputting ~~operation~~ successive operations by the player on a first operable member based on [[of]] a command for causing the play character to perform the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

controlling the play character to perform the technique with control of the play character throughout the technique based on correspondence of said successive operations with said command;

evaluating the technique performed by inputting the ~~command~~ successive operations in accordance with the ~~guide~~ command through ~~operation~~ operations of [[a]] the first operable member;

setting the size of said mark in response to operations of a second operable member by the game player within a predetermined time period wherein the size of the mark is increased with increase in a total of the number of operations;

setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play character in a partial area of the game screen image;

setting a landing success zone in the landing setting display area;

displaying a landing mark which is movable;

enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth operable member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located within the landing success zone; and

causing the play character to land.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium storing a technique setting program in a video game for displaying a play character in a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the technique setting program comprising the steps of:

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a degree of difficulty of [[the]] a technique in response to a game player input;

setting the degree of difficulty of the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with a size of the mark;

guiding an inputting operation of a series of commands requiring

corresponding successive command inputs by the game player on a first operable

member for causing the play character to perform a technique corresponding to the

set degree of difficulty;

receiving said successive command inputs from [[a]]   the first operable

member operated by the game player; [[and]]

controlling the play character to perform the technique with control of the

play character throughout the technique based on correspondence of said successive

command inputs with said series of commands;

evaluating the technique performed by the play character in response to the

inputting of the successive command inputs based on correspondence of said

successive command inputs with said series of commands; and

wherein the step of progressively increasing the size of the mark includes

setting the size of said mark in response to the game player input being a number

of operations of a second operable member by the game player within a

predetermined time period wherein the size of the mark is increased with increase

in a total of the number of operations.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the technique setting program further comprises a step of changing the mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty through further operation of a third operable member.

19. (Previously Presented) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the technique setting program further comprises the step of causing the play character to land.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium storing a technique setting program in a video game for displaying a play character in a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the technique setting program comprising the steps of:

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to the degree of difficulty of a technique in response to a game player input;

setting a degree of difficulty of the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with the size of the mark;

guiding an inputting operation of a series of commands requiring

corresponding successive command inputs by the game player for causing the play

character to perform the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

receiving said successive command inputs from a first operable member

operated by the game player; [[and]]

controlling the play character throughout the technique based on

correspondence of said successive command inputs with said series of commands;

evaluating the technique performed by the play character in response to the

inputting of the successive command inputs based on correspondence of said

successive command inputs with said series of commands;

wherein the step of changing the size of the mark includes setting the size

of said mark in response to a number of operations of a second operable member

by the game player within a predetermined time period wherein the size of the

mark is increased with increase in a total number of the number of operations;

setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play

character in a partial area of the game screen image;

setting a landing success zone in the landing setting display area;

displaying a landing mark which is movable;

enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth

operable member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located

within the landing success zone; and

causing the play character to land.

21. (Original) A computer readable recording medium according to claim

20, wherein the landing success zone is set narrower as the degree of difficulty is

set higher.

22. (Previously Presented) A computer readable recording medium

according to claim 16, wherein the guiding is conducted in a command input area

set in a partial area of the game screen image, and the series of commands is

displayed in the input area in the form of icons.

23. (Previously Presented) A computer readable recording medium

according to claim 16, wherein a higher evaluation is given as a shorter time is

required to input the successive command inputs.

24. (Previously Presented) A computer readable recording medium

according to claim 16, wherein, when the input of the successive command inputs

is not completed within a predetermined time, the play character is caused to

perform an action different from one performed when said successive command

inputs are completed within the predetermined time.

25. (Original) A computer readable recording medium according to claim

16, wherein the play character is caused to perform a complicated technique when

the set degree of difficulty is high.

26. (Previously Presented) A video game device for displaying a play

character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play

character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty,

comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a

technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting

unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said

mark being progressively increased in correspondence with a greater the degree of

difficulty of the technique;

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with

said set degree of difficulty, said series of commands requiring corresponding

successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set,

a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive command inputs for causing the play character to perform said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the successive command inputs in accordance with the said series of commands displayed by the command guiding unit, and

a second operable member, operated by the game player, for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in response to operations of said second operable member performed by the game player within a predetermined time period;

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play character in accordance with the successive command inputs given by the first operable member.

27.   (Previously presented) The video game device according to claim

1, wherein said mark changing unit changes the size of the mark in accordance

with the number of operations of the second operable member performed by the

game player within the predetermined time period.

28. (Previously Presented) The video game device according to claim 27,

wherein said size of the mark grows as the number of operations of the second

operable member increases.

29. (Previously Presented) The video game device according to claim 27,

wherein said second operable member is comprised of two operable buttons and

the degree of difficulty of the technique to be performed by the play character is

increased as the number of alternative on-and-off operations of the two operable

buttons increases within the predetermined time period.

30. (Previously Presented) A video game device for displaying a play

character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play

character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty,

comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size thereof corresponding to the degree of difficulty in such a manner that the larger the size thereof the higher the level of difficulty is;

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with said set degree of difficulty, said series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set;

a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive command inputs for causing the play character to perform said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the successive command inputs in accordance with the said series of commands displayed by the command guiding unit, and

an a second operable member, operated by the game player,

for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in

response to the operations thereof performed by the game player

within a predetermined time period such that as a number of

operations performed by the game player within the predetermined

time period increases, the degree of difficulty set increases to a

higher level; and

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play

character in accordance with the successive command inputs given by the first

operable member.